

Message Three

The Need of the Moral – Life's Regeneration

Scripture reading: John 2:23-3:36

I. Man's Condition and Need

- A. From chapter three through chapter eleven the writer relates nine cases to prove the principle of life, which is to change death into life, set forth in the first sign in chapter two.
- B. These cases first expose the condition and need of man, and then they reveal how the Lord can deal with all the conditions and meet all the needs of man.
 - 1. The conditions of the people mentioned in these nine cases represent the conditions of all men.
 - 2. All the conditions of these nine cases can also be found in each individual person.
- C. Life is sufficient to meet the need of man's every case.

II. Lord's Commitment

- A. The Lord could not commit Himself to such people that believe in Him because of seeing the miracles He did –2:23-25.
- B. But the case of Nicodemus, a case of life in regeneration, reveals that the Gospel of John is not for miraculous things, but only for life – 3:1.

III. Regeneration, a Prerequisite to Full Salvation

- A. Man's and religion's false concept – the need of better teaching to improve man.
 - 1. Nicodemus was a person of the highest class, with a highest attainment of education, in a position of honor and authority, an old man full of experiences, a moral and good man, and truly seeking after God.
 - 2. Due to human culture and Jewish religion, Nicodemus thought that he might need better teachings to improve himself –3:2.
 - 3. But the Lord's answer in the following verse unveiled to him that his need was to be born anew with the divine life – v. 3.
 - 4. Nicodemus was seeking for teachings which belong to the tree of knowledge, but the Lord's answer turned him to the need of life, which belongs to the tree of life – cf. Gen. 2:9-17.
 - 5. Thus, man's real need is to be regenerated with another life, the life of God.
- B. Man's real need – to be born anew – 3:3.
 - 1. To be born anew is not to enter the mother's womb and be born again, but to be born of water and the Spirit – vv. 4-5.
 - 2. Regeneration is the termination of people of the old creation with all their deeds, and the germination of people in the new creation with the divine life – cf. Matt. 3:11.
 - 3. The flesh begetting flesh, and the Spirit begetting spirit – v. 6.
 - 4. Regeneration is accomplished in the human spirit by the Holy Spirit of God with God's life, the uncreated eternal life – cf. Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:15-16.

5. Thus, to be regenerated is to have the divine life, eternal life in addition to the human, natural life as the new source and new element of a new person.
 6. Regeneration is for the entry into the Kingdom of God – v. 5.
- C. Man's real condition
1. Man is poisoned by the "serpent," with a serpentine nature.
 - a. Poisoned to die like the Israelites in the wilderness – Num. 21:4-9; Matt. 3:33; Luke 3:17.
 - b. Christ lifted up on the cross in the form of a serpent – John 3:14; Rom. 8:3; cf. 2Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15.
 - c. The "ancient serpent," the Devil, Satan being judged through this – John 12:31-33; Heb. 2:14; cf. Rev. 12:9.
 - d. Man believing in this Christ and having eternal life – John 3:15.
 2. Man is condemned in Adam through his sin – v18, 36; 1John 3:10
 - a. The Son of God coming to save man from this condemnation – John 3:17.
 - b. Man being saved from this condemnation by believing in the Son of God – v 15, 16, 18, 36; cf. 1Cor. 15:45; 2Cor. 3:17; John 1:12-13; 1Cor. 6:17.
 - c. The Son of God coming as light – John 3:19-21.
 3. This shows that regardless how good Nicodemus might have been outwardly, he had the serpentine nature of Satan inwardly, as a descendent of Adam. He needed the Lord not only to be the lamb of God to take away his sin (1:29) but also to be in the form of a serpent that his serpentine nature might be dealt with on the cross and that he might have eternal life.

IV. The Increase of Christ

- A. Christ coming as the Bridegroom of the Bride – v. 29.
- B. All the regenerated ones becoming one as the Bride of Christ given Him by God – Rev. 21:2, 9-10.
- C. The Bride of Christ being His increase – John 3:30; cf. Gen. 2:21-24.
- D. Regeneration not only brings the divine life into the believers and annuls the satanic nature in their flesh, but it also makes them the corporate Bride for Christ's increase.

V. The Immeasurable Christ

- A. He is such an immeasurable and unlimited One, who comes from above, who is above all, to whom the Father has given all, and who dispenses the Spirit without measure – v. 34.
- B. As such a One He comes from heaven, and yet still in heaven – v. 13.
- C. Such a One needs a universal increase to be His bride to match Him, as revealed in vv. 22-30.
- D. He who believes into this immeasurable One has eternal life; he who disobeys this One is under the wrath of God – v. 36.

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Reference Scriptural verses

John 2:23-25. **23** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed into His name when they saw the signs which He did. **24** But Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them, for He knew all men, **25** And because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

John 3:1-36. **1** But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the JEWS. **2** This one came to Him by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. **3** Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he? **5** Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born anew. **8** The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. **9** Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be? **10** Jesus answered and said to him, You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things? **11** Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak that which we know and testify of that which we have seen, and yet you do not receive our testimony. **12** If I told you of the things on earth and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of the things in heaven? **13** And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. **14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** That every one who believes into Him may have eternal life. **16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. **18** He who believes into Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed into the name of the only begotten Son of God. **19** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. **20** For every one who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his works be reproved. **21** But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be manifested that they are wrought in God. **22** After these things, Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He spent some time with them and baptized. **23** And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people came and were baptized; **24** For John had not yet been thrown into prison. **25** There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. **26** And they came to John and said to him, Rabbi, He who was with you across the Jordan, of whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him. **27** John answered and said, A man cannot receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven. **28** You yourselves testify of me that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him. **29** He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full. **30** He must increase, but I *must* decrease. **31** He who comes from above is above all; he who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks out of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. **32** What He has seen and heard, of this He testifies, and no one receives His testimony. **33** He who receives His testimony has sealed that God is true. **34** For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure. **35** The Father loves the Son and has given all into His hand. **36** He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

III.A.3.

Gen. 2:9-17. **9** And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **10** And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches. **11** The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. **12** And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. **13** And the name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Cush. **14** And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is

the one that goes east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. **15** And Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it. **16** And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, **17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

III.B.2.

Matt. 3:11 I baptize you in water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is stronger than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire,

III.B.4.

Ezek. 36: 26-27. **26** I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. **27** And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and My ordinances you shall keep and do.

Rom. 8:15-16. **15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery *bringing you* into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father! **16** The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

III.C.1.

Num. 21:4-9. **4** Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. **5** And the people spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread. **6** Then Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. **7** And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah and against you; pray to Jehovah, that He may take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people. **8** Then Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. **9** And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Matt. 23:33 Serpents! Brood of vipers! How shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna?

Luke 3:7 He said therefore to the crowds going out to be baptized by him, Offspring of vipers, who prompted you to flee from the coming wrath?

Rom. 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,

2Cor. 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Heb. 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like *us*, *yet* without sin.

John 12:31-33. **31** Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out. **32** And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself. **33** But He said this signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

Heb. 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

Rev. 12:9 And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

1John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, neither he who does not love his brother.

1Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

2Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

John 1:12-13. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, **13** Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

1Cor. 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

IV.

Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:9-10. 9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. **10** And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Gen. 2:21-24. 21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. **22** And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called Woman Because out of Man this one was taken. **24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.